

Message Text

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USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6122

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: INTERSINDICAL SEEKS TO ORGANIZE LABOR CONGRESS

REF: LISBON 5998 (DTG 021154Z SEP 76)

SUMMARY: THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LABOR CONFEDERATION HAS TAKEN ANOTHER STEP TOWARD HOLDING ITS OWN LABOR CONGRESS TO REUNITE THE LABOR MOVEMENT UNDER THE AEGIS OF INTERSINDICAL. THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONS REJECT ANY SUCH CONGRESS. PROGRESS ON ANY JOINTLY SPONSORED NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS IS STALEMATED. END SUMMARY.

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1. FOLLOWING A SERIES OF REGIONAL MEETINGS, THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LABOR CONFEDERATION, INTERSINDICAL, HELD A NATIONAL MEETING IN LISBON SEPT 4. PRESS AND PUBLIC WERE BARRED FROM MEETING. PRESS RELEASE CLAIMED 194 DELEGATIONS WERE PRESENT (128 AFFILIATED UNIONS; 39 NON-AFFILIATED UNIONS, MOSTLY OF THE FAR-LEFTIST UDP; 8 FEDERATIONS; 16 REGIONAL CENTERS; AND 3 LOCALS) ALTOGETHER REPRESENTING 1,400,000 PORTUGUESE WORKERS.

2. PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO COUNTER EFFORTS BY DEMOCRATIC UNIONS TO ORGANIZE A NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS ON THE BASIS OF PARITY BETWEEN INTERSINDICAL AND THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONS. AS EXPECTED, INTERSINDICAL MEETING UNANIMOUSLY REJECTED A CONGRESS ORGANIZED ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY ON THE GROUNDS THAT ITS AFFILIATED UNIONS REPRESENT 80 PERCENT OF PORTUGUESE WORKERS, AND ON BASIS THAT DIFFERENCES SHOULD BE WORKED OUT WITHIN THE LEGALLY RECOGNIZED CONFEDERATION.

3. MEETING CREATED AN ORGANIZING COMMISSION FOR ITS OWN "CONGRESS OF ALL PORTUGUESE UNIONS FOR THE RESTRUCTURING OF INTERSINDICAL." ALTHOUGH DEMOCRATIC UNIONS HAVE EMPHATICALLY REJECTED PARTICIPATION IN ANY INTERSINDICAL-SPONSORED CONGRESS, THE ORGANIZING COMMISSION HAS DESIGNATED POSITIONS FOR SEVERAL DEMOCRATIC UNIONS AS AN INDICATION THAT THE CONGRESS IS "OPEN TO ALL."

4. COMMENT: SOCIALIST PARTY LABOR ADVISOR PELAGIO MADUREIRA TOLD LABATT SEPT 3 THAT HE BELIEVES INTERSINDICAL IS RELUCTANT TO PROCEED ON ITS OWN TO HOLD A NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS. ANY SUCH CONGRESS WOULD ONLY CONFIRM THE EXISTING DIVISION IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AS WELL AS AGAIN DEMONSTRATE THE SECTARIAN POLITICAL ALIGNMENT OF INTERSINDICAL.

5. THE SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THESE EVENTS IS THAT THERE IS AN IMPASSE ON THE SOCIALIST PROPOSED NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS, WHICH ORIGINALLY ENVISIONED A NEW, DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERATION RESULTING FROM A REUNIFICATION OF THE PCP-CONTROLLED AND THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONS. NEITHER INTERSINDICAL NOR THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONS WILL AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS WHERE THEY KNOW IN ADVANCE THEY WILL LOSE. ON BALANCE, SUCH
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AN IMPASSE IS BENEFICIAL TO THE SOCIALISTS AS IT IS THE PCP AND INTERSINDICAL WHICH STAND TO BENEFIT FROM ANY REUNIFIED LABOR MOVEMENT.
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